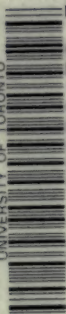


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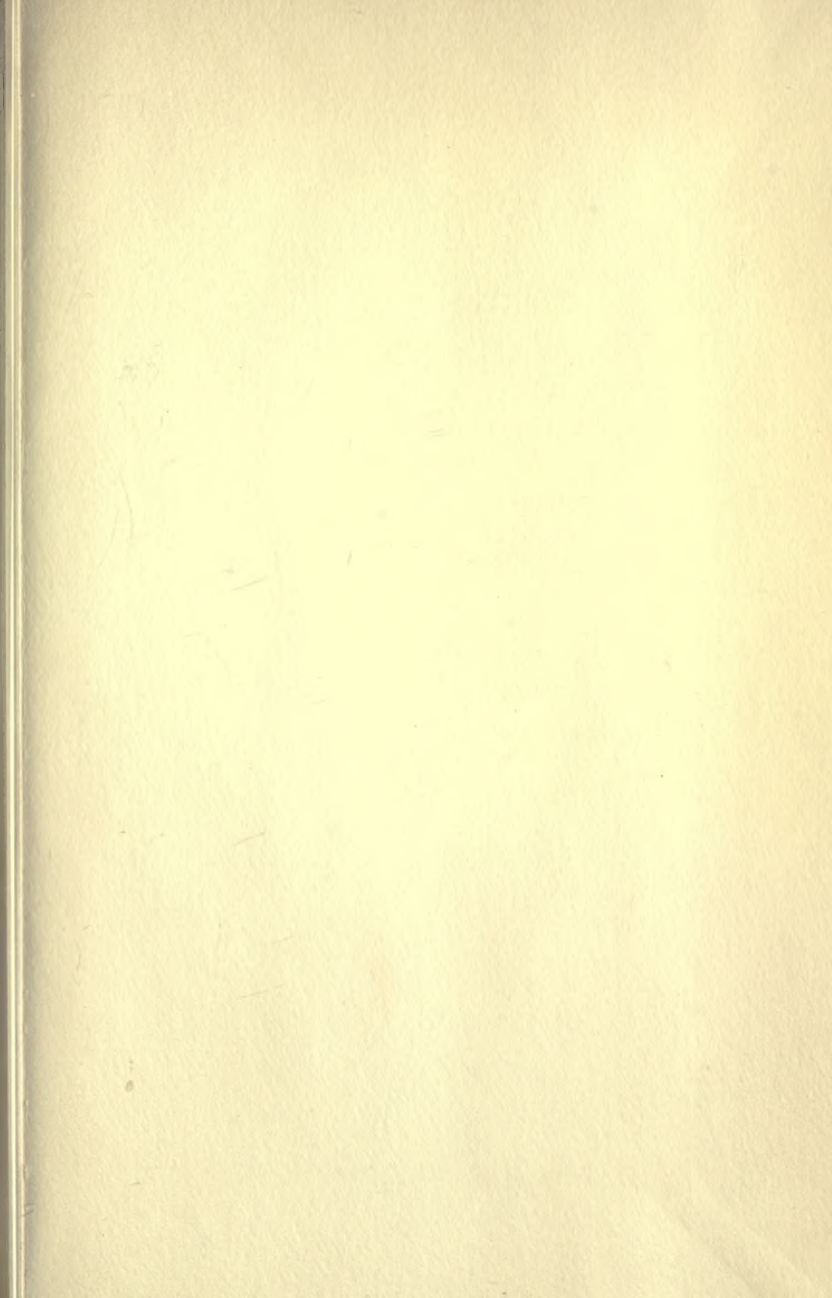
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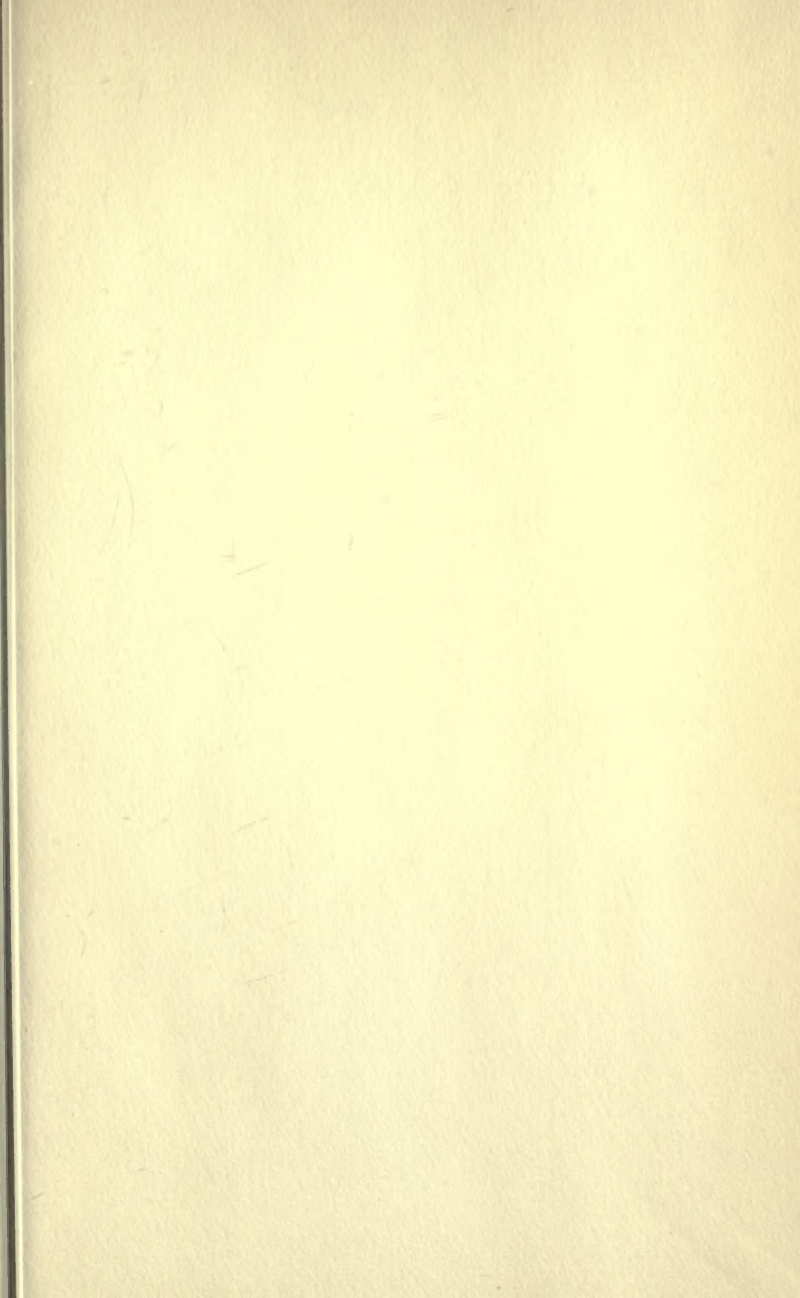


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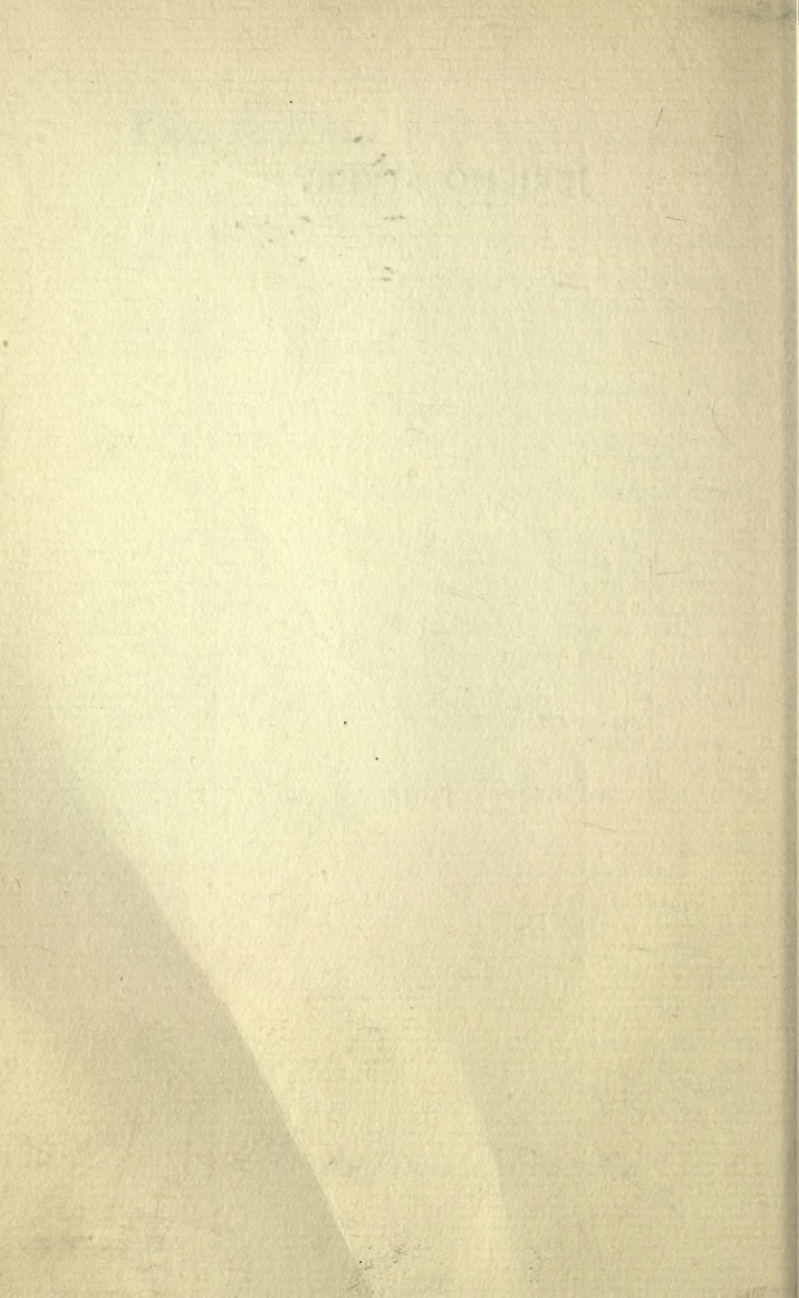
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JERICO STREET



JERICO STREET

AND SELECTED POEMS

(1908-1921)

BY

WALLACE B. NICHOLS



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LONDON
GRANT RICHARDS LTD.
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NOTE

Some of the poems in this selection are derived, occasionally with revision, from certain of my previously published volumes ; for permission to reproduce others I beg to thank the Editors of "The Westminster Gazette," "The Windsor Magazine," "The Englishwoman" and "The Poetry Review" ; and I wish to acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs. Erskine Macdonald in allowing me to include a passage from "The Song of Sharruk" ; the rest, about half of the total number, are now published for the first time.

JERICO STREET

*"Why not . . . paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works—paint any one, and count it crime
To let a truth slip."*

BROWNING.

TO
E. P. S.

JERICO STREET

TO-NIGHT the climbing street lies bare
Unto a flood of starry air ;
A few gaunt lamps are lit, and soon
Over the roofs will surge the moon.
Against the planetary space
The tall church rears a stony face,
As dumbly praying to be quit
Of its long watch of the infinite.
Up either side, in rigid sets,
Stretch the monotonous maisonnettes,
Their yellow windows, deadly neat,
Shining alike along the street ;
But one amazing puddle glows
With the absolute crimson of a rose
Where through red blinds a vivid light
Is pouring level on the night.
In ordered file lank chimneys jut
Into the sky, and, clearly cut,
The church's little steeple lifts
Its cock among the Uranian drifts ;
With headlights blazing full a car
Stands mid-way up the hill, the tar
On the wet road made molten there
By that electric, white-hot glare.
A cold, low wind comes up from the east,
A new wind, and the rain has ceased.
Save where belated footsteps sound
Along the pavement, all around
Time's old, original silence broods,
Twin-brother to that hush in woods
Which is the thunder at the core

Of life. The shutting of a door
Disturbs it once ; a tram clacks past
The street's lower end, and leaves more vast
Than ever that great soundlessness,
Till all at once some votaress
Of music starts to sing, whereat
The street awakes from flat to flat.
Here someone plays an exercise,
And with her thin piano tries
To drown a neighbour's gramophone,
Whereon is pattered, out of tone,
Some tuneless, vain banality.
Across the road rings laughter free,
Laughter of girls ; and, just above,
A conscious tenor whines of love.
Near by a man is playing Brahms ;
Another opposite squeezes psalms
Out of a sick harmonium ;
Next door one finger tries to strum
The latest ragtime's syncope.
A dog barks twice ; and suddenly
The distant clocks reverberate
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight
And nine. And all things stand and seem
A large and stationary dream
Wherein the poet beholds unfurled
The flow and vision of the world,
And in one street possesses whole
Life's actual and immediate soul,
In dwelling after dwelling seeing
The immortal fire of mortal being.

AT NUMBER 4

WHEN evening comes she sits and sews,
And what she dreams, or thinks, none knows.
Once she was young, once she was wooed,
But the end is shabby spinsterhood ;
None probes what wound within her burns.
Her mending done, she snips her ferns,
Then waters them, and wipes their fronds,
And mutters of pawned diamonds.
Her wigged head has begun to nod ;
And she bears malice unto God.

AT NUMBER 17

GREY-HAIRED and mild, he reads his book.
If in his heart the world might look
The Christian's old simplicity
Of eager faith were found the key
To all his life, beneficent, pure ;
And yet the Bishop finds no cure—
With folk an-hungered for Christ's Feast !—
For this dear scholar, this dear priest.
He sits alone and smokes his pipe,
And tires his eyes with small Greek type ;
But soon he lays Origen down,
And, with faint smile and fainter frown,
Of young ambitions dreams once more :
How he would make his own the lore
Of Greece and Egypt ; and would teach
The loftiest wisdom known of each ;
And cleanse the Church of hireling strangers
As Christ the Temple of money-changers.
To-night he sits alone, sad-lipped,
Pondering an Alexandrine script ;
To-morrow at a local school
He deputises for a fool.

AT NUMBER 28

BACK from his clerking, so ill-paid,
He hangs his coat—the cuffs are frayed—
And smoothes his anxious brow before
Opening his sick wife's bedroom door,
Softly, as but to take a peep
Lest he disturb her vital sleep ;
But she, awake, and feverish,
Turns to his coming, and her wish
Is spoken in her suffering face—
To die, to die ! In his embrace
Her lids close gently, and her hair
Is bitter to his smell. No prayer
Broods in their hearts ; they wonder why
Their first kiss did not prophesy
Amid its throbbing breath their last.
But he must get their scant repast,
And goes into the kitchen where
He lights the gas-jet's dismal flare.

AT NUMBER 35

HE pours a whiskey out and drinks,
Then sits beside the fire and thinks.
Sometimes a chuckle breaks his beard ;
Sometimes it seems as if he leered
Across at cronies, dead long since.
So sits the old doctor, still the prince
Of wise discourse and courtesy,
And hale and bluff at seventy-three.
No cynic this materialist—
A worldly, mellow humorist.
He lights a good cigar, and blows
The smoke. The scandals that he knows !
He has watched lives through from womb to tomb ;
He has found strange webs in nature's loom ;
He has heard, this genial misanthrope,
Truth only through his stethoscope.
He sits and thinks of one he knew
From child to hoyden, as she grew,
Until her rose-dark womanhood
Stirred unprofessionally his blood ;
And he could scarcely ease her pain
Upon her death-bed for the strain
Of smoothing back a burning tress
And touching her white loveliness.

AT NUMBER 42

THEY sit, the husband and the wife
Together, joyous in their life ;
They have been wedded now a year.
A secret brings them yet more near ;
And while he reads aloud to her
Oft their awed eyes, abashed, confer.
He has forgotten loneliness,
Youth's perilous ache and primitive stress ;
She has forgotten an old lover
And his drawn look when all was over,
With the waste fields and dimming sky
So dumb around his dumb good-bye.
Does she remember that her bliss
Was quarried from a soul's abyss ?
Her lyric yearning sings full quire ;
She sees a cradle in the fire.

AT NUMBER 59

HER rouge is on, a hectic touch,
And lip-salve, just a shade too much ;
Her eyes, from belladonna bright,
With morbid mockery shine to-night.
She dons a large, provocative hat,
And takes up from a toilet mat
A pseudo wedding-ring to wear.
One *moue* within the glass, one stare
Of blank indifference at those eyes
That so ironically wise
Stare back at her, and she goes out—
To Coventry Street and thereabout.
She thinks of butcher's bills unpaid,
And of the chances of her trade,
Nor realises that such chances
Are life's electro-plate romances ;
She cares not, so she get her price,
And has no relish for her vice.
She slams the door as forth she goes,
Pleased no one of her neighbours knows
Her ancient errand through the streets.
To-morrow afternoon she meets,
Suburbanly, respectably,
A bevy of local wives at tea,
All honest women, paying calls.
To them, she sings at concert-halls,
She works so hard, is out so late ;
And she assents, demure, sedate.
But she will leave them early—lest
She miss her hostess' son up west.

AT NUMBER 68

SHE sits and mutinously sews,
And in her heart resentment glows ;
Why should she not be let go out
To take a brisk walk round about ?
Do they suspect she goes to meet
Dick at the bottom of the street ?
What if she does ? Where is the wrong ?
She hums the latest catchy song.
Well, wait till she is twenty-one,
Then she will have her fill of fun.
But what a bore ! What will he think ?
Oh, let it rip ! Blue fox or mink ?
Or musquash ? Next week are the sales. . . .
Why won't Dick manicure his nails ?
She must remember that blue bowl ;
And ribbon for her camisole,
Pale pink. . . . "What were you saying, father ?
Want me to post your letters ? Rather !"

AT NUMBER 77

THE grim old servant lifts him up ;
Against his teeth she sets the cup ;
His brother stands above his pain,
Impatient not to miss his train.
They slyly nod across the bed—
His flickering breath has ceased ; he is dead.
What is the body, what the soul,
And what the fabled aureole ?
He was ; he is not. Shall he be ?
A force in nature : is that he ?
He has changed the mask upon his face ;
His place shall know him not, his place
Is with the Knower in the unknown—
To be a worker there ? Or drone ?

AT NUMBER 84

SHE is afraid, yet proud with joy.
“Nurse, will it be a girl or boy?”
She only asks one question more :
“Is that you, doctor, by the door?”
Then, “Say to Jack, if I should die. . . .”
’Tis half a scream and half a sigh !
His flickering breath begins ; he is born.
Comes life through the ivory gate or horn ?
In the new body this new soul,
So warm yet from its aureole !
He was not, now he is ; let be.
A force from nature : is that he ?
Time’s vizard is upon his face ;
His place shall know him well, his place
Is with the unknowing in the known—
To be a worker here ? Or drone ?

AT NUMBER 91

THEIR quarrel lifts a viperish head,
And whatso bitter words they have said
There yet are bitterer words to say.
“For months I have cursed our wedding-day ;
I would we had never met at all !”
“At least for once we are mutual !”
“Love turns cold iron that soon is rusted.”
“Women may every time be trusted
To take a chance of being spiteful.”
“Men always are, of course, delightful !”
She drops a curtsey, calls him fool,
Then sits on the piano-stool
And plays a burning waltz whose bars
Breathe of deep kisses under stars.
Out in the street a passer-by
Hears, and looks up, and gives a sigh ;
Often he longs for intimate life
Beside that best of friends, a wife,
With firelight, melody, dreams and peace.
He walks on, and the gay notes cease.

AT NUMBER 96

HE takes a treatise from the shelf,
And sits down to improve himself.
He dabbles in biology,
And not in Rimmon's house bows he !
He turns the pages with the air
Of one who knows life's why and where.
He dabbles, too, in socialism,
And has a genius for a schism.
On Sunday he will fulminate,
With cheap humanity, cheaper hate,
In Brockwell Park against the laws,
And win a little cheap applause.

AT NUMBER 99

THEY greet and shake hands easily,
And none of the other guests would see
The memories smouldering in their eyes.
They have safely weathered the surprise
Of meeting after—oh, how long
Is it since she was all his song ?
He casually studies her
Across the room. But now the old stir
Is gone, the old ardour is burnt out—
He is disciplined to do without
Her nuptial step upon the stair,
And the faint perfume of her hair
Upon the pillow. Five slow years
Since that bored judge with legal shears
Severed the knot that bound their lives !
She once had been the wife of wives,
The pearl, the ruby—then he came
With his insidious words of flame.
Tremendously he rapt her ! Christ,
Are there no women born unpriced ?
Something will buy them, if not gold :
A subtle way to snare, and hold,
And loose, and snare, and hold again ;
A doping ecstasy of pain ;
A trick of voice—God knows what swerves
A woman's moods, a woman's nerves !
He is not so easy now ; his thought
Goes back to the ardencies he taught
Her maidenhood. He had her first !
How has she slaked that other's thirst ?

AT NUMBER 101

THIS dainty girl of ten is dreaming
Of running in a meadow gleaming
With daisies and the three-leaved clover,
And chasing butterflies skimming over
The grasses, with the sunlight glittering
Upon their opal fans as, flitting
In fairy morrice, they go winging.
She races after, laughing, singing,
But off they dart, nor settle ever,
And vain is all her dear endeavour.
Dream, dream, for this is also certain :
Thy dream sees life through truth's own curtain—
We follow butterflies, chase them madly,
To catch but air, and turn home sadly.
And should we brush one wing a little
'Twould kill, for loveliness is brittle,
And cannot live beyond the smutching,
But withers at the lightest touching.

AT NUMBER 110

UPON the hearth full length he lies,
A genius in his mother's eyes ;
His scribblings litter up the rug.
Ambitious, morbid, lazy, smug,
He strikes an attitude to the stars,
And thinks he wears the poet's scars.
Nothing of life he knows ; and frets
Like a caged skylark who forgets
No aery perfume of the sun,
Nor any gyre he ever spun
Above a summer field of corn,
Dew-flickering in the vivid morn—
And beats the bars with wings that rage.
O trivial and suburban cage !
The poet must eddy and stream with men
And women ere the strength of ten
Become his own inheritance.
He must be buffeted of chance ;
Jilted by fickle joy ; and find
The achieved at odds with the designed ;
And women's kisses at conclusion
The flaming doors of disillusion ;
And time a ruin at random hurled :
Then is he strung to voice the world,
To mourn with age, to dream with youth,
To be the trumpet of the truth,
To see life naked, bare of trope,
Quit of that braggart prattler, hope.

AT NUMBER 121

THE mother and the daughter sew,
Sitting within the firelight's glow,
And happy silence, happy speech
Fill the placidity of each.
They have only little, want no more,
And this day passed as that before,
Which passed as all their others passed,
Not tardily, nor yet too fast,
But full of quiet certitude
That life is God's and amply good.
Not theirs to know how ill it seems
Unto a neighbour's shattered dreams ;
Nor theirs vicariously to feel
The sufferings they could never heal.
They glean a satisfying life
Out of the very core of strife,
Nor apprehend how near they dwell
Unto the mid recess of hell.
Their son and brother soon is due
From China. Vases, peacock-blue,
And orange silks, and necklaces
Of jade he brings across the seas.

ALSO AT NUMBER 121

O H, up at seven, to bed at ten,
Then wearily up at seven again ;
Morning till night no rest from work,
For ever scrubbing like a Turk.
Eating her supper, she is dreaming
That she in silks and jewels is gleaming,
A favourite of the " movies," starred
In flaring letters, each a yard.
To-morrow night is her night out,
When Alf will walk her round about ;
And planets will deliberate,
Punctilious upon their fate,
Since not a grass, or earthen clod,
Or sage, or fool escapes from God.

AT NUMBER 134

TWO candles shed their married lights
 Upon the table where he writes,
 Sitting alone, with passionate heart
 On fire with all he would impart
 To her he loves. But shall he dare ?
 Oh, her red lips and dusky hair !
*" When first I saw you, well I knew
 At once that there was only you
 In all the world ; you, you alone
 To my desire and for my own.
 Was it of you I had dreamed so oft,
 With your soft eyes and mouth so soft ?
 I do not know, I only know
 I love you past all power to show,
 A dream no longer, but a woman,
 And oh, so wonderfully human !
 I love you, there is nought to tell
 Beyond that telling. Though I sell
 My soul for jewelled words to send,
 There would be no more told in the end.
 Give me your hands, give me your mouth,
 To comfort my impassioned drouth ;
 Give me yourself ; to you I give
 Myself for ever. Let us live ! "*
 Then he remembers he is poor ;
 Oh, who is he to turn her wooer ?
 He reads his letter bitterly through,
 And sighs, and tears it into two.

AT NUMBER 145

THE unruly boy is put to bed,
And now she lays her throbbing head
Upon her arms and weeps from care.
Gone is her husband, who knows where ?
Another woman holds him fast.
Youth now, her flame-soft youth, is past ;
Her son grows up and needs a man
To teach him what no woman can.
His face is weak, his father's face ;
She fears he will be her disgrace,
And pokes the coals, and dares not think,
But turns, as yesterday, to drink—
A sip of fire to allay a fire,
With none to quench that fire's desire.
Then as she puts the bottle by
Behind the clock to cheat the eye
A bitter lightning sears her through—
What of his mother's weakness, too ?

AT NUMBER 150

THERE is as high a tragedy
In this poor room as one may see
When Ajax, Lear or Œdipus
Cry forth aloud in overplus
Of sorrow and sublime despair ;
But there is here no buskined air
Of greatness, no immortal fire
Flashing, no sob of flute and lyre.
Yet here no less one fights with Fate,
To find her laws inviolate ;
Here, too, the Furies have pursued
A soul into its solitude ;
And here the long assault of God
Is met with but a brittle rod.
What of the tragic pomp and beauty ?
Here are the rags of terrible duty.
What of the purging of the passions ?
God purges every soul He fashions.
Though Agamemnon, king of kings,
Pass to his death o'er broidered things
Of woven crimson, is he, then,
The loftiest of all tragic men ?
Is he sublimer in his ills
Than he who cannot pay his bills ?
Or a more tragic sight to see
Than a good man in poverty ?

AT NUMBER 163

THE hush of love is in their souls
As in his clasp she sits, while rolls
The unlagging world through space and time.
And he : " There is no height to climb
Beyond thy loving me ! " And she :
" No height beyond my loving thee ! "
To them, life's beauty is no lees
Of quaffed joys and philosophies—
That paler loveliness allowed
When dreams at last are disendowed ;
It comes out of the heart of youth,
Unpoisoned yet by the after-truth.
" Hearing thy breath up-well and fail
I should not hear the nightingale ! "
" Lying within thine arms, as now,
I am part of thee—ah, no, I am thou ! "
There throbs within this drab, staid room
The rapture that shook Troy to doom ;
And not more potion-mazed than these,
Iseult and Tristram on the seas !

AT NUMBER 172

HE knocks his pipe out, thinks of bed,
And laughs at all those months of dread
When every man who came and went
Was a detective on the scent.
Still he remembers the disguise
That so defeated prying eyes,
Those evenings he bought arsenic.
How naturally his wife was sick !
How naturally, as well, she died !
And so the doctor certified
Without suspicion or demur.
He now is glad he buried her
With ostentation. That was good !
He chuckles at his hardihood.
She had loved him to the last, and he—
Trust him !—was her sole legatee.
What doting things of him she had dreamt !—
And still he feels that old contempt.

THE father smokes and ponders there
 Beside the hearthstone's mellow flare.
 The boys are gone to bed at last,
 With homework done. His dreams are vast ;
 Naked ambitions stride the place.
 If to the swift does fall the race,
 And to the strong the battle, then
 Both swift and strong shall be the men
 Out of his loins, out of his brain,
 And he will not have lived in vain.
 Their mother comes into the room ;
 And still at fortune's cunning loom
 He weaves, and dreams of African veldt,
 And Indian hill, and all the belt
 Of empire, and the white man's load,
 And one by one each episode
 Of England's world-enclaspings glory.
 His sons shall add to that great story !
 While so he dreams, far otherwise
 The future to their mother's eyes
 Beckons, with tenderer promises.
 Heaven hears from her such different pleas :
 Her visions are of country life,
 Both of them with the dearest wife,
 A woman's woman in the home,
 And golden children, humoursome,
 Each one as lissome as a birch.
 And John might go into the Church. . .

AT NUMBER 196

THE hours are long from morning's light
Until the coming of the night,
And then they seem even longer drawn
Until the coming of the dawn.
She lies and suffers, and remembers ;
All of her hopes are dying embers,
And she is old, and life is grey
Now as its flood-tide ebbs away.
She has lain all through the afternoon
Half in a dream, half in a swoon,
Longing for evening and her son.
Why is he late ? His work was done
At six ; and was that nine which struck ?
She thinks of when she used to tuck
His little body in his cot.
For all her pains what has she got ?
There is no peace in motherhood !
What man has ever understood ?
No doubt he has asked some girl to go
To dinner with him in Soho.
Is that his key ? And with a sigh
She winces lest once more he lie !

WHILE they are washing pot and pan,
 The bibulous old harridan
 Swears at her tearful, pretty niece,
 To whom she gives no moment's peace,
 Calling her fool, with many a curse
 For not becoming something worse.
 "To fall in love with that young clerk !
 You certainly kept it very dark.
 My lodger, too ; and now he'll go,
 And there an end. I told you so.
 If only you would take advice !
 I know how you would find life nice ;
 If only, dearie. . . . Oh, you fool,
 To want to marry a foot-rule !
 I've worked my fingers to the bone,
 On to the dust-heap to be thrown !
 Satins and diamonds, dearie, think !
 If you would. . . . Blast this greasy sink !
 Many a man would pay five pounds ;
 And I could show you all the rounds.
 What's the use of a pretty face
 If you can't play it as your ace ?
 Well, go and starve on two pound ten
 A week ! You'll change your singing then.
 I've done with you for good and all !"
 Soon the girl goes into the hall,
 Where, virginal with love's first flame,
 She weeps in mutinous, lonely shame ;
 And when her lover comes at last
 She clings to him so fast, so fast !

AT NUMBER 220

IN creaking age she has had to turn
And work. Rebellious tears oft burn
Unwept within her aching lids,
Whence they would fall but pride forbids.
The contumely of service weighs
Heavy upon her latter days ;
Fit only for the knacker's yard,
No one beholds how she is scarred.
As wearily now she thinks of bed,
Across her window there is shed
A sudden, brief and vivid light ;
And by that sign and by that sight
She knows some girl, fair as a star,
Passes in her luxurious car,
Too young to have learnt life's bitterness,
Too rich to have fathomed poor folks' stress,
And dreaming, as she glides along,
Of rubies, kisses, dance and song.

AT NUMBER 235

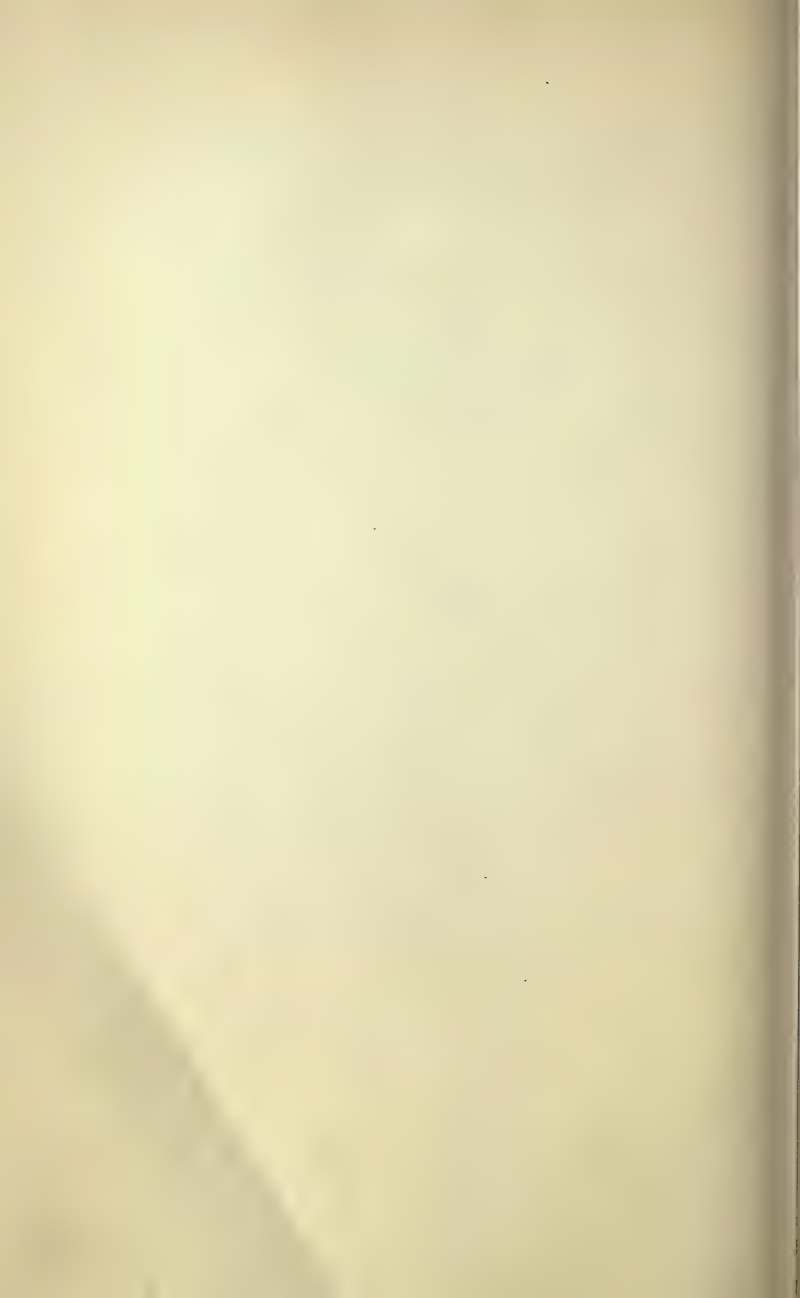
HE has played the " Hammerclavier " through,
And still his kindled thoughts pursue
The final movement's devious maze ;
And still he sits, with far-off gaze,
At the piano's glimmering keys ;
A visionary light he sees,
And the inmost soul of him is stirred.
He whispers reverently one word,
" Beethoven ! " that one mighty name,
And turns to catch his wife's exclaim
At a dropped stitch, and then to hear,
" Would you like pork on Sunday, dear ? "

HE blots his script, the final page
 Is written, and he flings his gage
 At fortune's foot. Interpreter
 Of systems, this philosopher
 Has summed in brief epitome
 At last his last philosophy.
 He turns back for a page or so,
 Then reads aloud in measured flow
 Unto himself thence on to the end,
 Pausing now here, now there, to mend
 A rhythm or change an adjective :
*" The shadow under which we live
 Is not from death's large wings, but life's ;
 We are afraid of mundane strifes
 Rather than supramundane law ;
 'Tis care that troubles us, not awe ;
 We dread our neighbour more than God ;
 And forethought for a period
 We show, not for eternity.
 There is but one way to be free :
 To find our freedom in our chains ;
 To ordain ourselves as Time ordains ;
 To await and meet what Thing pursues,
 And acquiesce in all the dues
 Of Chance, and so co-operate
 In life's fatalities with Fate.
 Opposing nothing, then are we
 Our own selves our own destiny."*

THE hour has waned into the wind,
Its echoes, circling out, have thinned,
And every clock has told his tale.
Over the street, loose, lactic pale,
Stray wisps of cloud are floating low
And half dissolving as they go.
The air is keener now ; the damp
Dries on the pavement, and each lamp
Shines with a clearer, steadier light,
The gustiness of the early night
Being spent. Out to his motor comes
The doctor ; soon its engine hums ;
He steps in and is driven away.
The sweeping and enormous ray
That its advancing headlights cast,
As they loom near and then blaze past
In one full surge of white-flamed foam,
Dazzles the dreamer wending home
From her he loves ; and her embrace,
And the soft marvel of her face,
And the warm odour of her hair,
Are with him still, too sweet to bear
Save with impassioned haste of foot
Timed to the heart's insistent lute.
He walks along, nor gives a thought
To what around him may be wrought
By humankind on humankind,
But hastens homeward, deaf and blind
Save to his pulses as they beat,
Save to her face that fills the street.
And now the church he passes, where
The organist, at practice there,
In diapason broad and free

Gives out a master's harmony ;
Till, throbbing through the hollow aisles,
The disentangled fugue defiles
Into the last majestic breve.
That all the tangles which we weave
Might fugue-like find their perfect chord !
But love brings life not peace, a sword.
It takes us grimly by the throat,
And ends upon a leading-note !
Hush ! Up the sky there mounts the moon
In her full glory, and her rune
Is sung to wizard melody
From starry shore to starry sea ;
The zenith cries in joyous pain,
Smitten with beauty ; and the Wain
Loads up with silver harvesting ;
And from the Pleiades take wing
A myriad nightingales of fire ;
And hark !—Apollo with his lyre
Hymns his immortal sister's hair.
Look, look ! The street with blue-grey air
And pearl-pale light turns to a bed
Fit for Endymion's drowsy head ;
'Tis Latmos ! Latmos and the scent
Of broom, and sound of doves' lament
In the warm wind, and Dian's breast
Unto her shepherd's bosom pressed !
'Tis Latmos ! Let the world cry nay :
'Tis Latmos and the Muses' Way !

1920-I.



SELECTED POEMS

(1908-1921)

TO
MRS. DESCHAMPS

THE TOWER OF UNREST

*HE paces all alone within his tower, the gazer
Upon the stars, and waits a footfall that he
knows.*

*He listens for its coming. Ah, the fond appraiser,
Thinking to hear a foot whose fall is light as snow's !
There flaps a bat upon the tower's wide skylight ;
An owl hoots from his nest, a Capuchin
Whose alien orisons absolve the twilight
Of Autumn's incommunicable sin.
A sound is on the turret stair. He turns. She enters in.*

*Her beautiful face is wimpled in her marvellous tresses ;
Her chiselled lips are firm with sweetest tenderness.
What is there nobler, braver, than her tendernesses ?
Swift are her eyes to kindle, swift her hands to bless,
And swift the pities sovran in her bosom.
A passionate dispassion is her kiss,
Folding around the breath like jasmine blossom ;
Her quietude is but an emphasis
Of motion, sculptured ; and her thoughts are white
infinities.*

HE

*Thou comest late, O lady. Evening dims and closes ;
Already Hesper dances, flashing laughs of fire ;
Arcturus binds her golden hair with burning roses,
And hers with lily-sprays white Vega of the Lyre.
The seven-starred Guardian of my fates and for-
tunes*

*Issues to greet thee, guardian of my soul,
And all the splendour of the heavens importunes*

Thee, me, to love. The Swan's lit girandole
Invites to festival. Blind me with kisses that cajole !

Thy lips are chill and unresponsive. What mute
 meaning
Is imaged in their sorrowful drooping, so con-
 strained ?
What vestige of old passion are thine eyelids screen-
 ing ?
Or is it some new pang that on thy heart has rained ?
Forget ! This is the hour of dreams and pleasure.
Forget things past, to-day's things are our own.
Bid all thy memories, or of dust or treasure,
Be by great winds through the great spaces blown
Far hence, far hence into the night, past Cassiopeia's
 throne !

SHE

O friend, too fond, unlink thy mastering arms from
 round me ;
I tremble at thy touch, I shrink from thy caress.
Life at the last has here too resolutely found me ;
I am ashamed, I am ashamed of happiness !
Forgive me, dear, and doubt me not. The mystery
Of our pure love sustains me more and more :
This is no folio of familiar history—
Revulsion settling slowly to the core.
It is not that, believe me. But I stand at some veiled
 door.

I am ashamed of love-words and all sense of rapture ;
The sorrow of the world has numbed love's voice
 that sang.

The booms and groynes of life are underpinned with
sapture ;
Remorselessly the surges crash with roar and clang.
Give me some comfort, dearest heart, some healing
For this corrosive wound that burns my breast.
Give me some comfort, for my soul is reeling,
Bewildered with the labyrinthine quest
For the olived wisdom superimposed on the ancient
palimpsest.

*She leaned her chin upon her hand in silence, musing.
Her furs had fallen, and loosely hung about her waist ;
The firelight mellowed all her lovely neck, diffusing
Sweet softness o'er that beauty, so desired, so chaste.
The tower, save at the hearth, was full of gloaming ;
And in the shadow stood the astronomer.
A desolate sweep of wings from sad birds homing
Troubled the darkness with an eerie flirr.
She leaned and gazed into the fire. His soul encompassed
her.*

HE

Thou art overworn with weariness, O sweetest
woman.
Look up unto the stars, and in their lovely light
Rejoice thy spirit. In cosmic things forget the human.
Or look on those slim branches, motionless, and
bright
With moonrise silver. Are we not great lovers ?
We have our passion and the unfailing stars.
What is there fairer than when night discovers
And pours her treasures from her turquoise jars
For thee and me ? Why dost thou fret behind the
infrangible bars ?

SHE

Point not unto the stars, nor to the pastoral branches
 Asleep below. Theirs is not love's tranquillity.
 It is indifference merely, and indifference blanches
 My woman's heart and the utter inmost soul of me.
 God's voice seems but a far-off little thunder ;
 Man's voice is loud with folly and deceit.
 The austere great truths have fled, to dwell asunder
 Till earth be hyssopped, sanctified and sweet,
 For she is stained from wars, and all her glory is a
 cheat.

HE

It is not we have stained her ; all love's tilth is
 stainless ;
 As stainless as the bourns ploughed by the lunar
 share.
 Not yet is noonday sunless, nor the midnight Wain-
 less—
 Then were indeed the hour to tremble and despair !
 Look up, look up in calm-souled adoration
 Before the wonder of eternal light.
 Let man cheat man, and nation trouble nation,
 What are these things beside things infinite ?
 What, too, is death beside death's lord ? Of vain
 account and slight !

SHE

But not of vain account these sufferings and these
 sorrows,
 These unheard sobs of praying wives, these human
 tears.

It is we women lend what Time the prodigal
borrows,
Even though we do not trust the voice that lures
our ears.
We are the helpers, helpless !—and we stumble
At cruel thresholds. Neither stars nor moons
Will raise us up ! Let, then, the spheres be humble
Before our lot : they know not death, nor runes
Of mourning, calmly moored in their ethereal lagoons.

O unseen, unknown Master of our days and breath-
ings,
Shall we not question Thee, and seek to understand
If it be Law or Chance that works behind these
seethings ?
So heavy on our lives is life's insistent hand !
We are cave-folk still, and no whit are we better
For Christ !—our human pity is but words.
Freedom we preach, and everywhere we fetter
The mild and poor, or shatter them like sherds.
No swords are beaten into ploughshares—rather they
to swords !

Who was it first won fame in war and by that winning
Deluded man into the lust for pomp and power ?
Divine aspiring had an undivine beginning—
Our vaunted evolution is a Babel's tower
Whereto we may not build beyond that storey
Whose coigns have paused irresolute in a waste
Of clouds and winds. Who was it first took glory
For his omnipotent star, and first abased
The weaker to the dust ? In him God's image was
effaced !

To thee, who art sage in system, meteor, sun and planet,
These may be little things, but 'tis the little things
That firstly touch a woman. Wisdom is of granite,
But pity is of earth, the soft, sad earth that clings.
Now if thy planetary lore have presage
Of earthly hope, then lift me to thy side
That I perchance may see what starry message
On Heaven's high headlands beacons far and wide.
Was it for truths past dying for that life's great
martyrs died ?

*He lit her passage up a spiral stairway, going
Into a circular chamber walled and roofed with glass ;
There, in the middle, loomed the telescope, wide-
throwing
Its shadow on the floor. They watched the moon's
cuirass
Hanging on high. Above, around, the starlight
Shimmered, clear silver in a bloom of green ;
Green was the air, and green was the angled sparlight
Flashed from Andromeda ; an olive sheen
Pervaded earth and ether, glimmering through the tower's
demesne.*

HE

White stars and saffron stars, stars silvery and golden,
Crimson and amethystine, emerald and mauve ;
Still is their pageantry as when it was beholden
By Magians in the waste and Druids in the grove.
They are strange to flowings, ebbings and disasters
Of death and fear, for they are law, and none
May set his hand against their proud pilasters

To topple them in perihelion ;
Nor rend asunder in fight the shaggy-limbed Septen-
trion.

What pageants of despair have these stars seen !
What ages
Of lust and doubt and massacre and fear and
joy
Have spawned their acts beneath them on now
crumbled stages :
Tyre, Carthage, festal Memphis, columned Baalbec,
Troy
And murmurous Nineveh. Countless generations
Of piteous and unpitied have whirled by
And fallen to dust, and nations after nations
Totttered to impotence and cried their cry
And perished ! These stars watched them one by one
know pomp and die !

When these our years are with the yester-years this
thunder
Of death and life, this whirling spindle and this
human skein,
Will be no more than but some lonely student's
wonder,
Part of the legend of the world's immortal pain !
But still the stars will keep their governed courses,
Undimmed, unstained, unmoved ; and law will
shake
The eternal rivers from the eternal sources,
To fill her ancient urns, whence life may slake
The fear of death ; and not a leash of any star shall
break !

I had once a dream, and it was full of sound and vision.

Methought I was upborne through interstellar air
Beyond the furthest limit of an eye's precision,
Swifter than moon-fangs darted from a cloudy lair.
Breasting the wind I seemed to swim the spaces,
Ripples of flamy ether swirling back
From off my strenuous arms. I saw wild faces
Looming and vanishing about my track,
And heard vague wailings in the wreathings of the
fleeting rack.

My course lay outward from the sun, across an ocean
Studded with isles of sapphires, rubies, diamonds,
And emerald archipelagos in dazzling motion ;
Then forth by meteored straits where blazing vagabonds
Hissed through the molten surge. Onward and
onward,
Through alternating summer and winter seas,
From zone to zone, from sequent suns to sunward,
Through frosty causeways of the Galaxies,
I passed, nor stayed in aery caves nor by sidereal quays.

I swam through thunderous whirlpools of white
exhalations,
But paused aghast to see and hear a marvellous thing,
I saw souls floating down those astral emanations,
Like golden ghosts, and heard them, as they floated,
sing :
" Seeking for freedom, as for warmth the swallow,
We are imprisoned in the stars 'twixt birth
And birth, streaming through all things, for we follow

The furrows of our fate from sun to earth,
And earth to sun, and sun to star through all the
cosmic girth."

From every orb I heard the voices of imprisoned
spirits.

Here spake the captains and the kings, with loud
lament

Over the irrevocable desire that disinherits

The soul and flings it whirling down the long de-
scent ;

There spake the slaves of love, who had sought for
rapture

In others' selves, not in their own ; and there

The thoughtful, who had dreamed that they would
capture

The old secret by their thoughts, but lo ! they were

In the end even but as water is in water, air in air.

From out one star I heard the faithless prophets
crying,

And the false gods out of another ; and I heard

Out of another a prolonged, despairing sighing,

It was the lustful, in their passions sepulchred.

And from another star I heard the cruel,

Lapped in the tiger flame of natal fear ;

And from another those who wear the jewel

Of abdication, poet, dreamer, seer :

These sang the Lonely Way that leads unto the Birth-
less Sphere.

Many the voices that I heard, beyond all telling,

Innumerable as the flame-crests in a track of fire.

It seemed as though the very void itself were welling
With sounding life and immaterial sense, a quire
Of mystical melody singing through rapt ether
The immutable hymns of Birth and Death. And I,
I with my naked soul, we twain together,
Swam on and on and on through endless sky.
Souls of fair harlots flaunted in the comets flashing by.

And even the winds were full of spirits, the spirits
of sad men,
Musing on hollow ecstasies ; and spirits of fools,
Whose long immunity from God had made them
madmen :
As many as leaves in Autumn strewn on forest pools.
And all these sang together, and with them others
I could not see, all singing of their Hell,
Their Hell which was themselves, and they were
brothers
In that their Hells were so illimitable !
Yet sang they, even amid their suffering, " All is well,
is well !

" Not when the burning axles of the stars are cooling
Shall our salvation end, it is an endless span.
Judge by the firmament the measure of God's
ruling,
Not by the fortunes and the various fates of man.
Through all things wanders free the everlasting,
Saving through life alone ; 'tis only death
That is eternal, death, which is the casting
Of our ephemeral breath into the breath
Flowing in all and through all. Death is wisdom,
Wisdom saith."

*They stood together looking forth on night's high places,
His arm enfolding her. They neither moved nor spoke.
A star fell, and they watched it fall through the aery
spaces,
A bubble of fire that in a trail of sparkles broke.
The moon dropped nearer to the phantom reaches,
The sea sank further from the phosphored shore,
And round the tower the silver-luminous beeches
Swung in a fitful wind. And more and more
Her soul was troubled, trusting not his visionary lore.*

SHE

Wert thou to solve for me the eternal cosmic riddle
That would not solve this earthly riddle at our feet,
This blind-spun web that holds us tangled in its
middle
Like flies whom spidery powers destroy. Faith is a
cheat,
And the sublime a show, and acceptance
But beggars' riches ! It is better far
To know nought and to do, than know salvation
And yet do nought. Discover a new star—
What of it ? 'Tis not what we know but what we do
we are.

HE

Thou hast quaffed some fabulous philtre of im-
mortal sorrow
Too bitter for thee, till thy dreams are dulled and
chilled.
The cosmic riddle leave unto the cosmic morrow ;
And the earthly riddle answer as thy heart hath
willed—

With tears and pity for the sick and broken,
With salve and balsam for the oppressed and poor,
And for the unhappy what is told unspoken.
None may break down the boundaries that immure
The spirit of man, we may no more than gird it to
endure.

SHE

Father, Which art in Heaven, Thy name be ever
hallowed ;
Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done in Earth
and Heaven ;
Give us our daily bread until our grave be shallowed ;
As we forgive our debtors be our debts forgiven ;
Lead us not in temptation, but deliver
Our souls from evil, for 'tis Thine the power,
The kingdom and the glory ever and ever—
And it was mine the weakness of an hour.
The Way, the Truth, the Life are not within a lonely
tower !

*Her prayer within his ears was like a sudden
thunder,
Her faith unto his heart was dear, but passing
strange ;
He loved her with a white and inarticulate wonder,
Even though his soul held nought of spiritual inter-
change.
And then his pagan dreams brake into flaming,
And brake his pagan spirit into a cry ;
Then all his being, as 'twere a poet's proclaiming
The truth of song and beauty of loves that die,
Sang out his pæan into the terrible silence of the sky.*

HE

O stars, eternal and immutable, who named you ?
Who learnt your laws and spied your marches, clan
by clan ?

O winds, O seas, O forces of the tides, who tamed
you ?

O herbs, O roots, who found your healing wonders ?
Man.

O wisdom, gathered from æonian branches,
Apple by apple, since the world began,
Who plucked and ate the daring fruit that blanches
Even him who eats, yet sets him at the van

Of the universe and in the council of the immortals ?
Man.

Who wove the living legends that have taught us
beauty ?

Who built the fabric of the state republican ?

Who lit before our eyes the illumining torch of duty ?

Who gave us, for an aim of being, virtue ? Man.

Who fashioned dreams beyond death's ebon portal ?

Who tore the veil from nature's dædal plan ?

Who bade the mortal know himself immortal ?

Who to the very throne of God foreran

And set God there upon that throne to be man's
master ? Man.

O man, immortal and omnipotent, creator
Of gods and wisdoms and the majesties thereof,
One wonder yet untold hast thou created, greater !
O my beloved, hath he not created love ?
Love is life's answer to the dooms that darken ;
Those who are loved doubt nothing. Lift thy cheek,

Turn thy soft ear unto my lips and hearken :
This is our wisdom, what our kisses speak,
This is our truth—what is there now to question or
to seek ?

*She yields her lips to his lips, making no replying.
Her beautiful face is like a tired nocturnal flower
Too weary even to hear the nightingale and lying
'Mid lonely odour in a hushed and haunted bower.
Their hands have yearned together ; and her lashes
Droop, mingling, and are moist. Fragrant she is,
And warm, and yet her maidenhood abashes
The very love it lures, even every kiss
Provoked and taken ! And her thoughts are white
infinities.*

*The tower seems dense as with intangible mists of
lilies ;
It is the morning mounting from the eastern marge.
The chariot climbs, the god plucks back his bowstring,
still is
That ancient arrow loosed against that ancient targe !
And they, they are together, loved and lover,
Dreamer and dream. The goldening lustre strows
Its radiance, like a virginal fillet, over
Her nestling head, abandoned to repose ;
Their mutual lips are like the furled soft leaves of one
deep rose.*

1915-1920.

THE WISDOM OF MERODACH

POUR ye the Song of Joy into your veins :
The hymn of Drunkenness of Soul is incense
Goodlier than myrrhs that fume in austere fanes.

Worship with joy all fugitive lovely things,
The golden dust on moths, dawn-light on olives,
All the sweet wonders that have such swift wings.

Lay all earth's fruits unto your lips and taste :
Pierce subtly to their subtle inner essence,
Nor thereof any smell or savour waste.

Love, and with joy. Love is like fire in fire
By one wind one way blown in mutual mingling ;
Cherish ye one another with desire.

O man, love woman. Holy is her breast,
Her body a vase of ivory and of opal,
Her kiss the caravanseraï of rest.

Woman, love man. Deep, when he loves, his truth,
And pure his passion ; and like bronze-drenched
silver
His limbs ; and vulnerable of thee his youth.

These do : not to amass or gold or wool,
Emeralds or figs or wine or starry wisdoms,
But for that ye do know them beautiful.

1916.

From *The Song of Sharruk.*

SLEEP

WHEN first the first of mortals felt his eyes
Grow heavy with the sudden weight of sleep,
And down his limbs the gentle languor creep,
Till then unknown, and laid him 'neath the skies
And sank into oblivion, what surprise,
What fear at that strange hap began to sweep
Through him ? Or was his weariness too deep
For wondering if he ever should arise ?
And, after, when sleep's custom had inured
His soul to that swift darkness, and he lay,
Weak, with unwonted pauses in his breath,
And felt his senses, as so often, lured
To slumber, went he carelessly away,
Or did he know it was not sleep, but death ?

1914.

ODE TO SUMMER

SUMMER, thou ripe meridian of the year,
How often in the honeyed heats of Spring
We have felt thy flavourous presence drawing near,
And heard the rise and lapse of thy far wing ;
How often under sanguine boughs of May
We have smelled the threat of thine impurpurate
scent

All through the lyric day,
As though an alchemist had flung full wide
The furnace where his molten ores have blent,
And gold's dense fragrance in a sultry tide
Flauntingly gushed away.

How often when, like to a drowsy slave,
Beneath thy tyranny the garden lies,
We have watched the roses over spring's soft grave,
And pondered that to die in youth is wise ;
For, after, with the splendour and the heat
There come the dust, the garishness, the drouth,
And more than all things sweet
Seem rest from labour and surcease from hope ;
Not though the wind is luscious of the South
Do we the less after dead Aprils grope,
Aprils that were so fleet.

But, Summer, then thou speakest, and we hear
Abashed, and from the shade creep forth to stand
Within the sunlight : " Was the spring so dear
That on her dying ye become unmanned ?
' Live, live ! Soar and enjoy ! ' my clarion saith.

Ye have loved a bud ; here is the mellow rose :
Kiss her and taste her breath !
A pæan, a pæan is maturity,
When the great petals of great life uncloseth
And blow indomitable odours free
Into the face of Death."

Ah, let us grasp then, Summer, the full flower,
And of its sweetness be intoxicate !
Give to our hands the whole bloom of the hour ;
Then, come what will, we shall go down elate,
Looking marauding Autumn in his eyes,
And laughing to the wind that strews the grass
With wrecks of enterprise.
Pour through our veins, Summer, thy rapturous fire,
That having lived, soared and enjoyed we pass
Not inconsolably to the ancient pyre
Where all magnificence dies.

1921.

AN APRIL MADRIGAL

O BIRD, who through the evening wingest
At this pale end of sundown here,
Which of us is it, thou who singest
Or I who listen, who comes most near
Unto the soul of melody?
O lyrical bird, akin are we!

When the rain and the sun have wooed together,
The violets bud at their own sweet wills;
So do birds and poets in the singing weather
Blossom with catches and turns and trills;
They sing to themselves and the world is theirs,
For all is his who sings and dares.

But the brief flower withers and the brief hour passes,
And the brief song flits through the trees and away;
And the rain and the sun desert the grasses;
But, poet and bird, we stay, we stay!—
For the hour's song and the hour's mood
Are our divine infinitude.

1915.

VAIN EMISSARIES

SINCE nought I am and nought I say,
Nor all my pure-cut lines impart,
Move her, I sent at break of day
Three birds to sing before her heart
And tell her how I love and yearn.
See ! One by one they now return.

What sangest thou to her, O thrush,
Thriller of dawn's invaded hush ?

" I sang of dew upon the mead,
Of lyric dew whose windy bells
Rang out to alder and to reed
A myriad soft desires and spells ;
And the sea murmured to the tower,
And the marsh murmured to the town,
And all the red roofs burst in flower,
And love claimed his disputed crown."

What sangest thou to her, O lark,
Joy's aery-templed hierarch ?

" I sang the song that, one clear noon,
Above the mustard-field I sang ;
Life in that hour wore magic shoon,
And where they trod white daisies sprang.
Twain sat above the sloping field,
She listening, while the dreamer read
Some old poet's lay that bade them yield
To love their youth ere it was fled."

What sangest thou, O nightingale,
Whose song turns unloved lovers pale?

“ I sang of brackened downs at dusk,
Of forests and the pine-capt steep ;
Of how life grew an empty husk
Without some passion, pure and deep,
Inevitable as stars at night,
Invincible as the sun by day.
The wood, weird in the dropping light,
Sighed with the sorrow of delay.”

Myself, O birds, told all those things :
They moved her but to memory !
Is there created voice that sings
Able to lure her soul to me ?
No voice : but only Time, she saith.
How oft is Time outstripped by Death !

1917.

TO A GRASSHOPPER

O TINY creature, chirruping,
Joyous as ever fabled king,
Climbing from grass to grass,
Leaping dread chasms 'twixt blade and blade,
God unto thee hath made
Life clear as glass.

And hearing thee and watching thee
A deep content hath come to me,
With hope and faith and mirth ;
I feel a calm unknown before,
I could kneel down, adore
And kiss the earth.

O tiny, quaint enthusiast,
Thine is raw singing : still, thou hast
The music hid in thee,
And happy they who can give voice,
As thou, to simplest joys,
Though meagrely.

1916.

LOVE IN SUSSEX

WHEN the light is brief
And the travail long,
When the tree has lost his leaf
And the bird his song,
And the tragic flowers,
Frozen in the soil,
Scent no more the sterile hours
Of so doubtful toil,
Lo ! the clock shall ring
Over the old church square,
And the marshland moon shall bring
Twain to wander there—
To remember all
Once beheld and heard :
Brown leaves rustling to their fall,
Laugh, and wingèd word,
Stream enstarred and still,
Gate and tower and strand,
Rooks in wrath upon the hill,
Glance, and taken hand,
Dew-belled meadow-path,
Shimmer of early air,
Warmth and reverie of the hearth,
Silence, and touched hair !—
Is the light now brief ?
Is the travail long ?
Has the tree lost now his leaf
And the bird his song ?

1916.

THE ASTRONOMER

HIS focussed tube takes him on high
Into the garden of the sky,
Till he can smell the roses there
Blushing amid the night's dim air.

And then he tasks his science, in vain,
To make a garland of the Wain ;
Nor can he pluck from midnight's trees
One apple of the Pleiades.

So, worn with failure, aged with doubt,
He watches the long darkness out—
Not knowing he himself is one
With all the stars he looks upon.

1913.

WITH A SCARAB

MORE than a carven gem,
Or delicate cameo,
Or vase's graven stem,
Thou canst refan the glow
Of ancient, ashen days,
Dead pomps and secret things,
Magnificence of kings,
And spoils of Asian frays.

But more than these thou hast known,
Scarab, yea, more than these :
The Sphinxian Riddle, blown
Through desert shawms ; the peace
Of Shu ; the might of Phthah ;
The tablets of grave Thoth ;
Isis, and astral troth ;
And the inner soul-flame, Ra.

Pharaohs have reigned and died ;
There are no Pharaohs more !
But thou in perfect pride
Art as thou wert of yore.
The pomps and pæans depart,
The beautiful things, they rest ;
And what thou emblemest
That, of thyself, thou art.

Yea, Immortality
Is thine as it is thou !
And lo ! I am sending thee
As such a symbol now :

Go, without more ado,
Immaculate messenger,
And say my love for her
Is an immortal, too.

1913.

ROMNEY MARSH

HERE once the moon her legendary tides
Led in reiterate phalanx o'er the roods
Of marsh, where dragonish and finny broods
Wallowed, and glimmering mackerel lipped their sides ;
Here now the sun abides, and grass abides,
And lambs browse on the soundless solitudes,
While, far-off, roaring through the year's four
moods,
Old, excommunicate ocean rides and chides.
So from Time's sea, and virgin to the stars,
Is here and there won by the spirit of man
A green eternal pasture—as when first
The cataclysmic heart of nature burst
Asunder in fire, and life's æonian wars
Of aspiration toward a God began.

1919.

AN ENDING

AS in the whirlpool's centre there is peace,
So in the heart of love there is release
From loving. Deem it not forgetting, then,
When I forgo the praise of you and when
I no more tremble as I touch your hand,
Nor sigh for the vain future that I planned ;
Love's outer circuits are too giddy swift,
The heart seeks refuge in the middle cleft,
Where passion narrows to tranquillity.
I am fain to rest, to cease from dreams, to be
Without all hope, quiescent, undisturbed
By foresight, with my memory straitly curbed,
And love, while not forgotten, laid away
As we lay rose leaves from the light of day
In some old book we shall not open more.
I stand like a wrecked voyager on a shore
Fairer than his own land ; yet he is wrecked,
And daylong vigilant lest the sea be flecked
With a far sail without his sighting it.
The lure of lost things is so infinite !
The enigma of your great consuming eyes,
Wearily calm yet passionately wise
With unaccomplishment of much desire ;
The languorous ardour of your mouth, on fire
With the mysterious kisses dreamed at night,
Ironical with intolerable delight ;
The lassitude of your tresses, opulent
With troubled flame and strange with troubling
scent ;
The rapturous pallor of your throat, so fair,
It seems the vials of the moon have there

Burst, staining it with silver glow—all these
Have meshed my life in their realities,
Till there is nothing real or fair or true
Save only you, beloved, only you !
It is your strangeness that I loved and love,
The following of your trail into the grove
Of feminine mystery, following to be lost
I know not where, I know not how, but most
Helpless in tangled undergrowth of dreams
And matted foliage screening sudden streams.
That was the following after you ! And now
Forth from the grove I am come, I know not how,
I know not when, I only know I am forth,
Alone amid the desolateness of the earth.
It is your strangeness that I love and loved,
Your dear and terrible variances that moved
And move me to the immeasurable madness
I have for you, and all the sterile sadness
That flows about my feet and dabbles them
With the spent ripple of love's requiem.
Listen unto this symphony of rhyme
Uplifted in your praise : 'tis the last time
My verse shall praise you. And is this not praise ?—
To show you how you fill my nights and days,
Albeit if only with the spume of Hell
And the Tartarian trumpets of farewell.
I love you too much for my praise to lie ;
I love you too much not to bid good-bye.
Do you not see 'tis better we should part ?
There is no thing as friendship when the heart
Is at this passionate height of enmity,
Loving so cruelly that it cannot see
The past behind it and the fate before !

I praise you now but shall not praise you more,
Not that I cease to love you, dearest one,
But that the wisdom of oblivion
Is worthier than the wisdom of despair.
So, then, beloved, let me pass and fare
Into the future, as I should, alone.
How can they soar who wilfully lie prone ?
Weep not that love, as all else, turns and wends ;
Love is born mortal for immortal ends.
But, come, for the hours pass on, O loveliest—
I am fain to cease from dreams, to be at rest
From love and longing for a little space,
Even from remembrance of your limbs and face.
See, to what words at last I am come ! But yet
Forget not, dear, that I do not forget.
I cannot. Who can be the iconoclast,
The cold iconoclast of his soul's past ?
I loved you and I love, but take surcease
From loving in the whirlpool's midmost peace.
And you ? When, in some far-off hour, your hand
Shall chance to wear my scarab and 'tis scanned
By him who holds that hand, and as your gaze
Follows his glance, how then will these dead days
Seem to your altered life ? What will your eyes
Answer to his ? What will your memories
Teach to that unborn child that will not be
My child ? What will you tell your son of me
When he shall hear my name upon men's tongues ?
Or tell your daughter, showing her these songs
That I, your lover, wrote to you of yore ?
Tell them but this, Madonna, and no more :
" He was my poet and loved my face too well,
And for my body walked the ways of Hell,

And for my soul clomb up the steeps of Heaven,
And for my tresses snared the Sacred Seven,
And for my heart made rhymes and words that live.
But I, your mother, had no heart to give ! ”

1914.

THE TWO WANDERERS

THEY are not spectres, these two wanderers
Beside this wooded pool where no wind stirs.

Nor are they living folk, these wandering here
In this dank region, desolate and sere.

They are embodied dreams that roam and meet,
And bruise the night-flowers with impenitent feet.

They are my dreams and thine. And mine are vain,
Sandalled with ashes, girt with knotted pain.

And thine are sad that should be girlish-fair—
Because my laurels scorch thy virginal hair.

1913.

ADAGIO

PEACE and rest and all things everlasting :
And a wind, dim-odoured as with myrtle,
Breathing softly, like the breath of springtime
Flowing through the tresses of a Mænad
Dreaming near the green pool in the forest.
Peace and rest and ancient things eternal,
Things far-off and grey and very ancient,
Peace and rest ! Like weary arrows fallen,
Fallen to the dust in unknown spaces,
Fall the dreams and pæans, spent and weary,
Fall forlorn in immemorial spaces
Empty save for solitary sunsets
And the tracks of death—eternal spaces
Where the soul may wed herself to freedom
And forget her fierce renunciations,
Taking to herself an eagle's pinions
And with one waft soaring through the vastness,
Therefrom gathering, as from boughs aërial,
Peace and rest and all things everlasting.

1914.

TO A BABE

(M.R.G.S.)

THY vivid eyes, thy living face,
As sweet and fair as moonlight shed
Upon some lyric upland space
When clouds are blown and pale rains fled—
So sweet, so fair one wonders whence
The immortal soul indeed may come
If not from God and that immense
Beauty which is our fabled home.

As yet thou dost not understand
The world, so curious to thy sight ;
Life moves as to a wizard's wand ;
Thou dost not seek to fathom night
And the awful mystery of the stars,
Nor yet the mystery of the day
Where, prisoned in infrangible bars,
Man sees his hopes ebb all away.

Is life worth so much eager care ?
'Tis in thy will to make it so :
What thou wouldst have fair, make thou fair ;
What thou wouldst know, take pains to know.
Build thou a cabin on this edge
Of Chaos, child, and study how
To sleep there, for the privilege
Of peace is neither here nor now.

Thou art a girl and wilt be woman ;
Thou art a maid, a slip of Eve ;

Thou art immortal, being human ;
And mortal, too, for love to sheave.
Maids are but shapen alabaster,
Vases for life and love to fill :
But, mistress, mistress, love is master,
And life bows down to love's high will.

1919.

INVITATION

FRRIEND and maiden, come thou down
To this pasture-cinctured town ;
Lay awhile thy tasks aside,
Here are peace and dreams' high-tide ;
Come and plant a memory
That shall always hearten thee,
For this red town holds such spell
That the brokenest hearts grow well
And forget their weariness.
Come, then, leave all care and stress ;
Let the bells of wisest Folly
Fright the spectre, Melancholy,
To incurable decline !
Here are fields that flash and shine,
Large, autumnal, wet and green,
Vivid with their rainy sheen ;
Windy trees with leafage mellow,
Brown and red and dim and yellow,
Dark and pale—a myriad tints
Filled with rays and watery glints,
Beams and opal drops of light.
Such by day : but when 'tis night
These rare lovelinesses seem
All translated to a dream,
Taken up to Heaven's own bosom
Till those trees of Autumn blossom
With great golden buds of stars ;
And the rains and dews to spars,
Crystal-angled, strangely turn,
Moonward snatched, and there they burn !
All these sights and shows await :

Come, before it be too late.
There are windings, gable-arched,
Paths and fieldways willowed, larched,
Gates and strands and towers and climbs—
Beauties that defy all rhymes.
Last—and rate it not too low,
Though it be quite least, I know !—
There is here, tip-toe for thee,
Its own self, Expectancy.

1915.

TO A SWALLOW

O SWALLOW, is it thou? Yea, thou at last.
Again thou twitterest in the accustomed eaves,
And through the warmth of this dim-sandalled hour
I hear thy drowsy wings deep-rustling into rest
Within the moon-dewed circlet of thy nest.
So, by that token, Winter now is past
And Spring is putting forth her leaves,
Building against the summer sun a tangled bower.

Why, Swallow, art thou once again come here,
Out of the lyric south unto the sober north?
Hast thou forgot the sign that sent thee forth
At the wild, reddening end of yester-year—
The first unhesitant cry
Of Autumn's winds upon a sudden shrieking by?
Autumn will come again—and thou again wilt go!

Dost thou wing hence remembering Grecian things,
Desiring Latmian haunts and Pythian springs?
Ah, simple bird, not so!
Thou cleavest to the magnet of the sun:
Thy nesting-place is where
Apollo's shaft alights each morn from off his bow.
But in remoter air
Morn after morn the target is moved on,
So ever further must the shaft be sped;
And 'tis upon the trail of its hot shadows
That thou dost wing thy trustful, eager way,
Nor by thy memory nor thy longing led,
But by the sun's warm shaft, descended day by day
In yet more distant meadows.
But we, when we fare forth, O Swallow,

Follow no arrows, nay, the arrows follow !—
Arrows of lonely pain and desolate thought,
The dædal arrows our own hands have wrought.

O Swallow, Swallow from the Rhodian sea,
What dost thou know of all such things as these ?—
Thou liable but to sunlight and the breeze,
But man to memory !

1910.

ON A GARDEN URN

*These, on the tablets of a garden urn,
Your friend, yet frail from illness, one green dawn,
Wrote under lilacs near a lush, wet lawn,
Bidding his dreams unto their fount return.*

I

STONE vase, full of moist moss and sweet, dank
mould,
With pedestal embrowned by mellowed stains
From many dawns and sunsets and long rains,
What peace breathes from the cool earth you enfold !
The hushed, wild garden, in a haze of gold
And silvery green, is filled as with refrains
Of lingering melodies whereby love's pains
Are laid away and wondrously consoled.
Beyond the verdurous pathway pleached with yew
The misted lilacs quiver in the breeze,
Anointing the slim ferns with spilled, clear dew.
O Spirit of Health, thy votary 'neath the trees
Awaits thee. Come ! His troubled heart renew
With wisdom, beauty, love—most, last of these.

2

Nightlong—never, it seemed, the dawn would rise !—
I strove with memories and with desires.
Infinitude leaned down to earth, Time's lyres
And viols played softly, mingling with the sighs
Of a young rose, when suddenly the skies
Trembled as with a miracle, white fires
Burst through the dimness, and exhaling pyres

Of fears smoked dreamily before mine eyes.
It was the dawn. Then my remembrance heard
The low sound of slow rain on slumb'rous leaves ;
And the first descant of a joyous bird
Calling his brown love from the lightening eaves ;
And the close whisper of a passionate word
That clinging lips bound 'mid their kisses' sheaves.

3

Over the silvery haze on paths and sward
There wanders, through soft flutterings of a flight
Of doves, a music from the close of night,
A dim duet, hautboy and harpsichord.
Spellbound I listen to their quaint accord :
O languorous happiness of sense and sight !
O deep felicity of morning light
Flooding the frondage in this garden-ord !
Somewhiles the note of blackbird or of thrush
Thrills from dense trees across the shimmering air.
From their wild breasts what joy and passion gush !
Beloved, amid glooms where roses flare
I yearn for you, and in the summer hush
My yearning almost is too sharp to bear !

4

My spirit, through labyrinths of fragrance, roves
From the still pool up to the piping faun.
I love you. Dear, I love you as the dawn
Loves the last star, and as the sea-wind loves
The sea ! More tranquil than those stainless doves
Returned from flight and settled on the lawn
Is this deep passion in my breast, not drawn

From vain, swift dreams but from truth's midmost
groves.

And if my yearning seek beyond your kiss
Unto yourself, in ultimate appeal
From soul to soul, sweet, marvel not at this :
Such exquisite womanhood your ways reveal
That purer than this rapturous garden-bliss
Is my desire of you, who bless and heal.

1916.

A STARVING BIRD

THERE droops a starving bird upon the frozen
ledge ;

No note he sang
At dawn, nor twitters now at dusk ; and on the hedge
No berries hang.

How like this piteous, solitary and stricken bird,
Dying unfed,
Were I, if suddenly there came the darkening word
That thou wert dead !

1917.

BY CANDLELIGHT

WHEN in your room to-morrow night
You brush your drowsy hair
Hold with your heart by candlelight
Conclave and counsel there.

Before you draw the coverlet pure
Over your fragrant breast
Be sure, immutably be sure
You love me first and best.

Have I not stayed the leavening,
The kneading and the fire?
Oh, if not now when shall I wring
Response to my desire?

I think if you knew verily
All that my soul endures
You could not help but come to me
With "Take me, I am yours!"

1917.

RYE

BETWEEN the shore and hill the red town broods
On its unocéaned cliff and gazes free
Over the saltings and their far-dyked roods
Of deep green pasture to the dunes and sea.
It is a girth of ancient gates, and strands,
And cobbled climbs, and ruddy roofs that lean
To catch each other's whispers ; and between
Hide haunted windings ; and low-lying lands
Sweep fallow downward thence, unsown, unploughed,
Where yellow yeanelings bleat at eventide
In the cool wind beneath the watery cloud ;
And the rooks wrangle and the starlings chide.

1914.

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY, February,
Why art thou chary
Of blossom and bloom ?
Old Winter is ailing,
His vigour is failing ;
Go, dig his tomb.

February, February,
Why be so wary ?
Laugh, kiss and sing !
Oh, many a lover
Has found love over
Before the spring.

February, February,
Earth's lot will not vary,
The primrose will shine ;
And though lovers may sever,
One friend is for ever,
And that friend is mine !

1921.

A WAYFARER'S VOLUNTARY

I SEEK to be no captain over you ;
Rather am I a watchman on your wall,
Proud to be mingled with your life's ado,
One, since he loves you, eager to your call.

I seek to wear no passionate cognisance,
So, by that token, to be named your knight ;
Rather am I unvowed, a poor free-lance,
Your comrade for a term in quest and fight.

I seek to be no minstrel in your bower,
Begging a rosy guerdon for my pain ;
Rather am I a shelterer 'neath your tower,
Whom you hear singing in the cold and rain.

I seek for no undue prerogative,
I ask no word your heart were loth to spare ;
Rather am I your brother, who may live
Free in your bountiful presence, happy there.

I seek for nought save to be always yours ;
And, being your friend, what can befall amiss ?
I have found in you one fortune that endures,
And life is more magnificent for your kiss.

1920.

IDUMÆAN SONG

SYRIAN warriors, O my mother,
Riding on their way ;
Tyrian seamen, O my mother,
Back from Carthage Bay ;

Persian magians, O my mother,
And Egyptian lords ;
Babylonian princes, mother,
With their jewelled swords ;

Yea, and poets, O my mother,
From the Isles of Greece,
Men who teach me, O my mother,
Things that break my peace ;

All these whisper, O my mother,
Of my lissome grace ;
Whisper they grow pale, my mother,
Maddened by my face !

And upon their knees, my mother,
They entreat my kiss :
Tell me, tell me, O my mother,
Why do they do this ?

1912.

THE INWARD CLARION

WHEN I behold dear youth sent down to death ;
And homely cities barbarously sacked ;
Christ's followers here denying what He saith,
Christian in babbled word, heathen in act ;
Nations all bloody from fraternal strife ;
And beauty powerless as a broken wing ;
Then I despair of faith and art and life—
Until I hear this inward clarion ring :
“ Rate not too richly peace and happiness,
Sorrow and war have each their lively sap,
Eternal truth unfoiled by temporal stress,
Immortal being unharmed by mortal hap.”
Then do I know that nothing can work wrong
To men or man, nor vex them over long.

1914.

A SONG BEFORE SUNSET

TO stand alone
Is not to be lonely,
But this is known
To the strong man only.
And the strong man is he
Who, unmoved, is moving,
And, loved, is not too loving,
Being calm and free.

And he who is free and strong and calm
Fears neither scathe nor harm ;
Alike he stands fast
In sternness and laughter,
And moulds from his past
His own hereafter.

Free and strong and calm be the poet !
Let him love woman, and show it
In the dawn of his day ;
But as noon draws nigh
Let him, with one last sigh,
Put the dawn-dream away,
And stand, alone and austere,
Listening for trumpets afar,
And girt for the onset
Of the hour that is near—
The hour of sunset
And the large star.

PERSEVERANCE

THE insistent sea attacks the shore,
And though repulsed through every age
It hurls its legions evermore
With ardour nothing can assuage.

O soul of mine, be as the sea :
And though thou art often driven back
Renew, renew incessantly
The phalanx of thy first attack.

1909.

MADRIGAL

SWEET, marvel not how few
The songs I bring to you,
Since what is due lies numbed upon my lips,
Or in eclipse
Because you check that flaming fashion
Of song that doth alone fit passion,
Which else goes like a wind away,
Ah, like the wind away !

The strings of this poor lute
Must publicly be mute
Or must transmute love's gold to palest dross,
Or, snapped across,
Jangle. . . . Love's song must be sung throughly,
Dear one, if 'tis to be sung truly,
Else goes it like a wind away,
Ah, like the wind away !

1917.

THE WINTER SLEEP

THE frost is here ; and the ice is on the roads ;
the wind
 Blows bitterly ;
And the earth foreshadows yet no choric flowers to
bind,
 Dear one, for thee.

She sleeps ; she dreams till April sound his passionate
pipe,
 The thrush his flute ;
But our love sleeps no winter sleep—yearlong hangs
ripe
 Its golden fruit.

1917.

THE RED INN

WITH noiseless foot down Mermaid Street,
When night is quit of the moon and free,
From lamp to lamp, where the shadows meet,
I have mixed with dead men in from the sea.

And ghostly kegs from the Camber Sands
Came over the marsh with ear-ringed knaves ;
And these hands toiled beside phantom hands
To stow them snug in the red inn's caves.

Then up the cliff to the black-beamed bar,
Where a lanthorn swung o'er a Sussex jade :
" How far have ye come, good seamen, how far ? "
" Lass, never thou mind ; and here's to the Trade ! "

1920.

LINES

(To a Restoration Tune)

FROM my entrenchments round your heart
I am not so lightly pressed ;
To baffle my besieging art
Needs skill beyond your best.
My leaguer is so strict a thing
That all my powers exult and sing
With a fa, la, la, la, la !

I have sworn to breach your walls and take
Your midmost citadel,
And with victorious trumpets wake
The void 'twixt Heaven and Hell.
Till you surrender, escalade
Shall be your constant serenade,
With a fa, la, la, la, la !

With foot of rhythm and horse of rhyme
I'll guard the approaches so,
That none shall succour you in time
Ere hunger lay you low ;
And should you dare to sally out
I'll send you to the right-about
With a fa, la, la, la, la !

Though fifty thousand gallants mass
To storm my leaguering lines
I'll show them all what comes to pass
When fools charge over mines ;

Then to your gates their coats I'll throw :
" Are these your lovers' coats or no ? "
With a fa, la, la, la, la !

So make provision in your soul
To yield to me at last ;
For fifes shall play and drums shall roll,
And, when their sound is past,
I'll shred your flag into the breeze,
And come and take your bosom's keys
With a fa, la, la, la, la !

1920.

SUMMER MADRIGAL

DEAR, when thou listenest to the nightingale,
There where thou art,
Lock away a note, a rhythm, of his passionate scale
In that casket, thy heart ;
So that when thou returnest hither ere long—oh, ere
long !—
And openest thy heart to me,
I may hear—doubly sweet, doubly pure, from its so-
journ in thee—
That song, that rapturous song !

1916.

THE TRIUMPH OF SPRING

O SPRING, thou mad deluder,
O Spring, thou wild unrest,
Once more, thou old intruder,
I find thee in my breast.

Why dost thou come to spoil me
Of my philosophy?
Why dost thou come to foil me
In all that I would be?

I would be troubled only
About the gods and truth;
I am used now to be lonely,
Arouse not my lulled youth!

O Spring, get thee to others,
Awake their dreams, not mine;
Thine ardour only smothers
A quiet more divine.

Go, get thee to the poet
Who knows thy rubric through;
I am grown too sad to know it,
Though once I knew it, too.

Go, get thee to the lover,
With thine impassioned fret;
Is not, for me, love over?
I would forget, forget!

O dews, O buds, O thrushes !
O songs from bough and bower !
Why do the frolic rushes
Whisper me " Snatch the hour " ?

Ah, Spring, thou mad deluder,
Thou specious alchemist !
Who is this young intruder
With mouth made to be kissed ?

1921.

SIR GUYON

HE sees the lightning flood the sky,
He hears the thunder crash on high,
He feels the wind against his face,
But slackens not his pace.

The rain is bitter, weird and cold,
But through its veil he sees the gold
Of the great stars drip silently
Into the sombre sea.

And through the storm's titanic song—
Wild as the threnody of wrong—
He hears round distant moonlit caves
The splashing of calm waves.

1908.

PASTORAL

WHEN fluting Arcady was wise
With many a shepherd deep in love,
And golden as the age the skies,
With never a thunder-cloud above,
But fields were green and waters blue,
Then thou and I were shepherds, too.

And that is why, sweet, nowadays,
We twain, re-met on this dimmed earth
After long æons of sundered ways,
Can love so simply, finding worth
In humblest things on plain and hill,
Both being at heart but shepherds still.

1917.

THE SUBTLE ETHER

THE subtle ether in my heart
Trembles with my delight in thee ;
And if, as Indian mages tell,
That ether is of deity
Then it is my immortal part
That loves thee, O most lovable.

1917.

FROM THE INNER CHAMBER

I

ETERNAL One, by whatsoever name
Thou art implored—Jehovah, Jupiter,
Ammon or Brahma by men's tongues which err,
Yet, one God or a myriad Gods, the same
Unnamable spirit—if now my soul, aflame,
Like a vast torch, with human love for her,
Would offer Thee an incorruptible myrrh
Of prayer, account it not to me for shame,
Though shameful is it, verily, to distrust
Thy workings, as, if adverse, to rebel :
So prayer seems oft a blind impiety ;
Yet, since I am only a little windy dust,
Nor able in my natural breast to quell
The irreverence of hope, Lord, suffer me !

2

That she is brave, and rare of heart, and sweet,
A flower of chastity, a lily clean,
And that, in her, Joy's fullest ears I glean,
A fabulous harvest of immaculate wheat ;
That in each breath of her, each pulse's beat,
I hear eternity : that this has been,
And is, my hallowed lot, O Giver unseen,
Shall I no more than thank Thee ? At Thy feet
Shall I not likewise pray ?—Even as the sun
Draws up the dew, so draw unto the light
My will, that, supple to Thine own, it move
As timely as a star whose track is run
From evening unto morning night by night
And without fail : nor, then, shall I fail love !

3

Master of mortal and immortal fate,
 Omnipotent in planetary might,
 Whence earthly dominance were a task full light,
 Shield her, to whom my soul is dedicate,
 From life's continual arrows, early and late,
 And all ill-hap, and chances that affright,
 Not her, but me for her, morn, noon and night,
 Even every hour wherethrough I watch and wait
 To do her ministrance. And after death
 Let her have come full circle, nor be sent
 Earthward to strive anew. If such should be,
 And once more she should breathe this temporal breath,
 Let not my soul keep vision—to be rent
 That day she loves another. Blind Thou me !

4

That love should be importunate for joy,
 God, who Thyself art love, forgive—and give !
 Life is so April-plumed and fugitive,
 And time so quick a sand, and without buoy
 The channels of the years, that all employ
 Of care is water-carrying in a sieve,
 Unless Thy favour grants, and bids us live
 To find even love itself no shadowy toy :
 Give our pale brevity the immortal hour
 Of hand in hand and breast on passionate breast !
 Didst Thou deny us ere yet space was tilled ?
 Bloomed not in Thy foreknowledge this prayer's
 flower ?
 Then shall Thy mercy reign and we be blest :
 That were no edict fallen, but prayer fulfilled !

Creator, all Thy works are brittle glass ;
 They shall be broken in that ultimate throe
 Of fire or ice when all things, sundering, flow
 Back to Thyself. The mountain's granite mass
 Shall fade into a smoke ; the valley's grass
 Shall crackle into dust and windily go ;
 The moon shall vanish, and her sea below,
 And suns and stars like spindrift wither and pass,
 To be no more. But still wilt Thou abide,
 And in Thine essence will eternal love
 Have habitation incorruptible.
 Into that mansion luminous and wide
 Accept us—nay, not Thou mayst dare remove
 From Thine own Self, O God, those who love
 well !

1918.

CAMBER CASTLE

THE ruins lie among the silent flats,
Weird with void arches, gaping arrow-slits,
And crumbled galleries opening on to the air.
Thin tufts of weed chequer the masonry
And shiver in the wind ; and from the walls
Barrows and knolls of quiet grass slope sheer
Unto the rondure of the middle tower.
There is around this tower a band of stone
With intervalled shields thereon and 'mid the shields
A gargoye, gibing still, with his split tongue
In his rent cheek. And opposite, withered, bleached,
Brittle, a spectral ash tree droops forlorn
Her unavailing boughs, as if his glance
Had chilled her sap with the cold mockeries
Of immemorial laughter. Wide around,
Up to the sands far-off, extends the marsh,
The sea, grown wearied of an ancient fere,
Having left bare unto the light and wind
His long-loved bed ; now level pasturage,
With winding dykes and lines of ruddy reeds
And sparse-ranked alders ravish his domain.
A shallow stream coils in among these flats,
Wreathing its waters round the red-roofed town
Free now and sea-less. There, with mellow gleam,
The casements shine against the fiery sun
That falls across the valley and below
The sister town upon the sister cliff.

1914.

THE NEW WORLD

I NEVER shall see the world again
As I saw it once—the sunlight, the rain,
The spring and the autumn, the starry night,
The sea and the woods and the moon's full light.

I never shall see it quite as of old—
The sunset's red and the noonday's gold ;
For I never shall see it henceforward now
Except through your love, I scarce know how.

Then be careful, my dearest, how you go,
For from under your feet the rivers shall flow ;
And never again will the world be fair
Except in the light of your eyes and your hair.

1918.

THE CROWN OF SORREL

OUT of my lonely sorrow
I could build you a mighty song
That should mock for many a morrow
Time's worst to do it wrong.

I could crown your hair with laurel,
As only the poets do ;
But a crown of the acid sorrel
Shall be all I will weave for you.

Why should I open song's portal
For you to enter in ?
I will not make immortal
The woman I cannot win.

1919.

IN FOUNTAIN COURT

I KEPT a tryst in Fountain Court,
I kept a tryst with memory,
And there full hard, full hard I fought
To be at peace with thee.

I stood alone in Fountain Court,
Was it in sunlight or in rain?
And there full hard, full hard I wrought
To dream one dream again.

There was a peace in Fountain Court,
There was a peace of silver spray,
And there full hard, full hard I sought
To be at peace this day.

There was a peace in Fountain Court,
Whose like is not on earth or sea,
And there full hard, full hard I thought
Upon the peace to be.

1918.

TRIPTYCH

I

IF all is so, good-bye ! Let us not kiss,
Lest that my soul lose foothold past recover ;
Let us austere part, ere love brim over
Into the dragoned deeps of hate's abyss.
Go from me ; take, in your o'er-shattering bliss,
Your intimate beauty to your new-found lover ;
But the evil wings of desolation hover
O'er my convulsed, discolumned edifice.
Go. Nay, not thus : despite of heartbreak, kiss me !
Do not your lips remember, and your breasts
Lift yet once more with passion 'gainst your gown ?
I think you will beyond foreknowledge miss me,
Seeking by separate paths to-morrow's quests.
Now you go that way up, I this way down !

2

Let there no more be spoken,
Let there no more be sung ;
You have taken another's token
Whatever heart be wrung :
The rain and the wind shall know me,
And I shall know the earth ;
And to-morrow perhaps will show me
Why to-day has cast me forth.

And should you ever travel
Whither our hearts once lay,
Do not you dare unravel
The tangle of yesterday :

The rain and the wind shall take me
Into the wind and the rain,
And never your tears would wake me,
Nor ever your love again.

3

One song yet—old habits linger,
And I was so long your singer !—
One song yet, and this the last,
Ere my heart be bolted fast.

Ah, my dear, why wonder whether
Had we never met together,
Never entered through love's door,
We had gained or lost the more ?

Never shall we wholly smother
What we were to one another ;
I am yours and you are mine
Still, in amplitude divine.

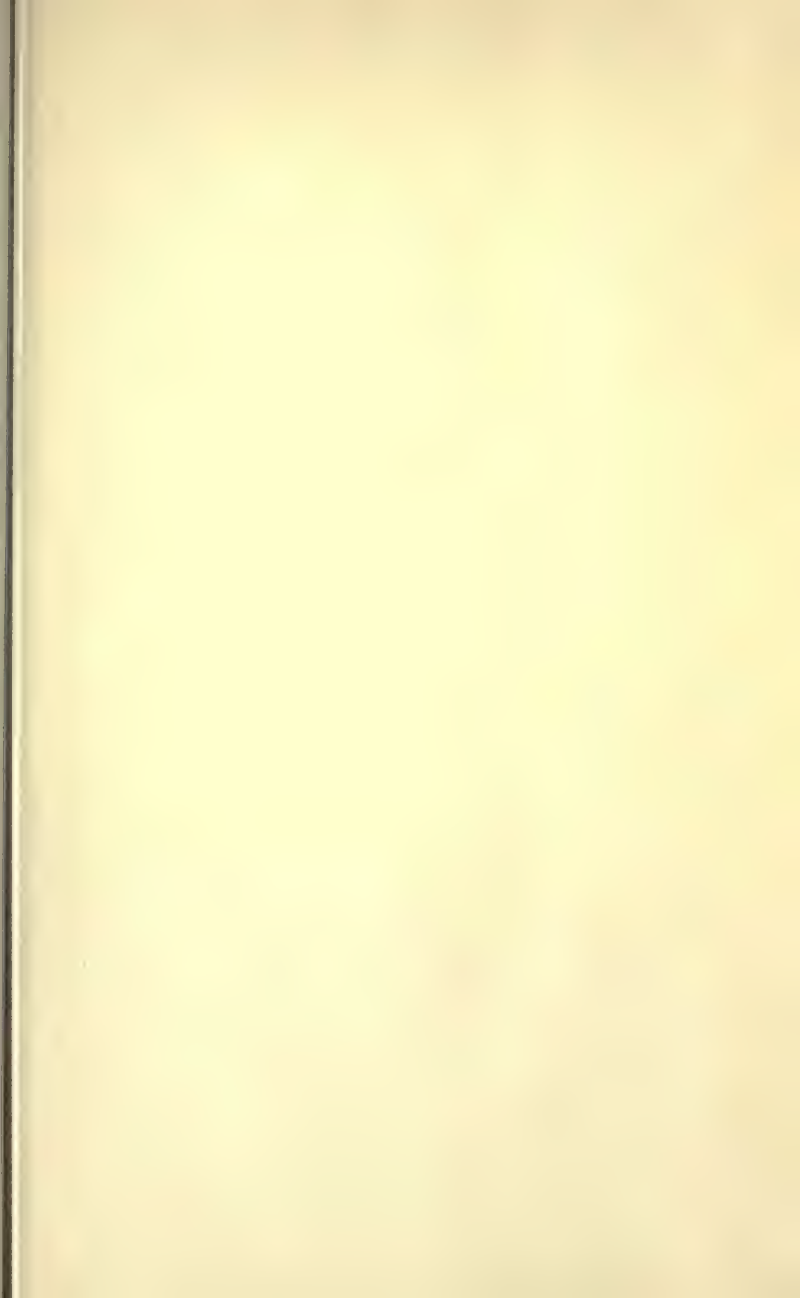
Now, before the bosom harden,
Take my blessing, take my pardon :
One last word as one last song—
I shall love you all life long.

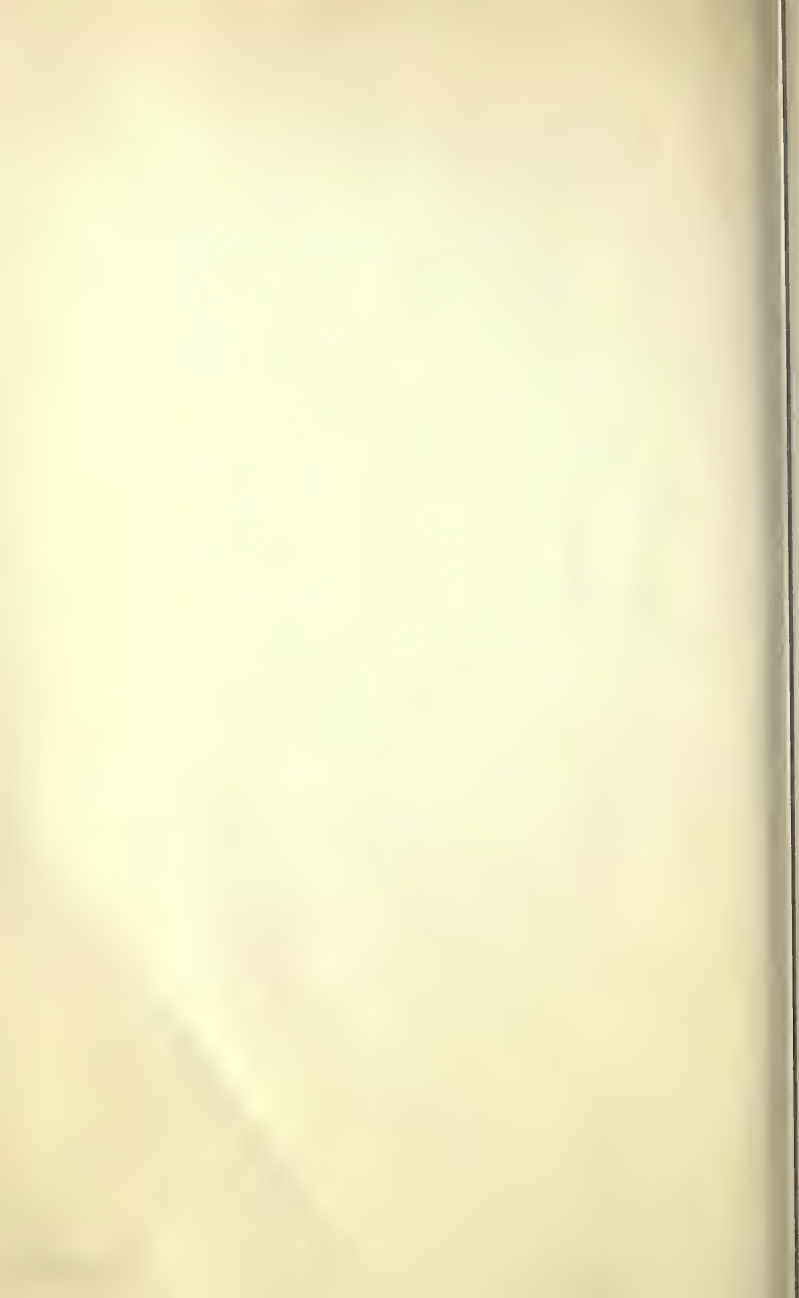
1920.

RYE AND REST

BEAUTY thou hast, and venerable date,
Magnificence of aspect, comely seat
And ancient birthright ; and no moth shall eat
The crimson tapestries of thine estate.
Within thy girth the heart can abdicate
Imperial sorrow, and the wanderer's feet
Abide, while from the marshes come the bleat
Of lambs and crying of birds returning late.
And rest thou hast, and perfectness of peace,
Divinities of the hearth and of the field
That meet not death whatever gods may die ;
Till, as Time waxes to his blown increase,
Despair has but a transitory yield
From the soul's meadow where love's harvests lie.

1920.









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